Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

A correspondent desires readers of Liberty to suggest a name to take the place of "husband" or "wife" in describing persons living in monogamic conjugal relationship under liberty. There are so many readers of Liberty who disbelieve in such relationship, whether with or without the sanction of the law, that they are hardly the persons to suggest a terminology that would be sympathetic to the monogamist. Speaking for myself, I would suggest "Siamese twin."

A private business man cannot improve his credit and standing by going deeper and deeper into d[illegible] He cannot restore confidence in his solvency and ability to pay by offering terms more and more unfavorable to himself. On the contrary, the readiness to pay high rates of interest is a sign of weakness in the eyes of creditors and lenders. Yet Uncle Sam, in defiance of all known principles of finance and business, has restored confidence in himself by adding to the amount of his indebtedness, and strengthened his credit by accepting hard conditions. Who can explain this paradox? It seems that every time Uncle Sam loses a few millions, his bonds increase several points in value. Wonderful, miraculous result!

It is very significant that the bitterest opponents of the income tax do not expect the federal supreme court to nullify the law. The arguments against it are strong and convincing, we are told; the tax clearly offends against the constitutional rule of uniformity, and is invalid for other numerous reasons. Yet it is expected to stand. Language will be violently stretched, if necessary; sophistry will be resorted to; common sense will be defied, — all for the purpose of sustaining the income-tax law. Have the plutocrats seriously attempted to account for this strange fact? The courts are their own, the laws are of their own making, and power is in their hands: why, then, can't they wipe out the obnoxious tax? There is only one answer, one reason, — because the majority of the people secretly favor it. How is it that the majority of your good Americans, Dana, have become so anti-American? And what are you going to do about it?

I have strong reasons for suspecting that the article on "Pensioners and Paupers" contributed to this issue of Liberty by Mrs. Ellen Battelle Dietrick was originally written for the "Twentieth Century" and rejected by that paper, although the author conducts a department in its columns. The "Twentieth Century" being a paper published for profit, there is no reason in the world why it should consent to diminish its profits by offending the paupers who see fit to spend a portion of the alms given them by the State in subscriptions to the paper of their choice. But I wish to call Mrs. Dietrick's attention to the fact that, although she persists in falsely and inexcusably proclaiming in the "Twentieth Century" that Liberty is opposed to the liberty of woman, she, a woman, when she desires to publish her views concerning social parasites, has to seek this liberty in these columns, which are edited, not for pecuniary profit, but in the interest of liberty and truth. Perhaps it is needless to add that I am very glad to have her do so.

Mr. Donisthorpe's obituary tribute to the late Mr. W. C. Crofts, which I reprint from "Personal Rights," is interesting and trustworthy testimony in vindication of a misunderstood champion of liberty. I personally thank him for it, for it has done much to remove from my mind a prejudice against Mr. Crofts which I entertained because of his continued connection in an official capacity with the Liberty and Property Defence League. Even now the fact that he retained the secretaryship of that organization compares in my eyes unfavorably with Mr. Donisthorpe's early and unmistakable public repudiation of the League's devious policy. But if, as I gather from Mr. Donisthorpe's article, Mr. Crofts remained in office in the hope of shaping the policy to really libertarian ends, his error was one of judgment merely. His personality commanded my respect, and it pleases me to know that my estimate of his characteristics, formed after an hour or two in his company through the courtesy of Mr. Donisthorpe, is confirmed by the final verdict of his lifelong friend.

Anarchists will find considerable satisfation in reading the report of a "conversazione" of the English Personal Rights Association in a late issue of "Personal Rights." It furnishes gratifying evidence of the growing popularity of Anarchistic ideas. The principal lecturer at the gathering was Sir Roland K. Wilson, an eminent jurist and distinguished individualist. He described his position with regard to the duties of the State as approximately that of Herbert Spencer modified by the principle of voluntary taxation, which he adopted from Auberon Herbert, subject to two conditions: (1) that the protection of the public force, and the right of voting in respect of it, be guaranteed only to those who pay a fair assessment; and (2) that assessments for defensive purposes be kept unmistakably distinct from any contributions for other purposes which the body representing the State may see fit to solicit. In the debate that followed the opening paper, one speaker, Mr. Gimson, expressed himself in favor of the voluntary defence proposition, which, he thought, "would work admirably in every way." If, he added by way of meeting an objection, there should be strong men not in need of protection, what ground would there be for compelling them to pay taxes for the protection of others? Miss Goff, another prominent individualist, said that the man who refused to pay should be left alone by the State and allowed to defend himself. Mr. J. H. Levy, who was the last speaker, avoided all reference to the subject of voluntary taxation, but there is plenty of evidence that the idea is gaining favor among the English individualists.

The statement that a State can have no rights except those delegated to it by individuals, which Mr. Whittick elsewhere quotes from Miss Katherine J. Musson, is singular doctrine on the lips of a Single Taxer. Miss Musson acknowledges the right of the State to collect rent from every land-occupant, this rent being in her eyes the just due of all individuals, since all have an equal right to the use of every part of the earth. It follows from these two positions that the State, if it collects my share of this rent, commits an act of usurpation, for I have not delegated to it the right to collect my rent. And yet I have not heard that Miss Musson or any other Single Taxer would limit the State, in the exercise of its rent-collecting function, to the collection of only such portion of the total rent as is properly due to the persons who have appointed the State their rent-collector. It follows further that all individuals who, like myself, have not appointed the State their rent-collector, may, if they choose, go about, each individually, from one land-occupant to another, collecting their respective shares of the rent due. According to this, I have the right to at once start out on a tour among my neighbors (or even among all the land-occupying inhabitants of the earth) and demand of each the delivery into my hands of that greater or smaller fraction of a cent which each owes me for the current quarter. Or, if I find this course too expensive, all those who ignore the State may unite in appointing a private force of rent-collectors to collect their share of the total rent. Does Miss Musson accept these logical inferences from her position?

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Plutocratic Dynamiters.

Read critically the following comment of the *pseudo*-Individualist Godkin's "Evening Post":

It is getting to be common for Socialists to say: "Well, our arguments may not convince you that it will be a good thing for the State to confiscate private property and monopolize all industry, but we are going to do it, whether you like it or not." This is really all that Liebknecht has to say in his "Forum" article explaining the programme of the German Socialists. There is no programme about it except that of unbridled brute force. True, he calls it democracy, the tide of history, and other fine names, but what it all really amounts is the assertion that the Socialists will soon have the votes, and therefore will soon have the guns, to carry out their will, and anybody who doesn't want to be smashed had better get out of the way. But it does not at all follow that the votes will mean the guns. Fitz James [sic!] Stephen, if we remember, defined democracy as the system which counts heads to save the trouble of breaking them, — that is to say, it is a provisional system, on trial, and tolerable only as long as it works well. It will be a simple step to go back to the old method of government by breaking heads the moment counting heads begins to land us in confiscation and State slavery. In fact, the process has already begun in a tentative way, as witness the Chicago strike last summer. A not inaccurate definition of democracy, at its best today, would be the counting of heads tempered by a judicious breaking of heads. Stephen agrees with Liebknecht so far as to say that force is the ultimate foundation of government, — the ability to say to a man, "Do this or hang." But this force has by no means passed as yet into the hands of Socialists, even in Germany, and the other folks, who now possess the force, will do a lot of hanging before they give it up.

Whether Godkin possesses sufficient logic to appreciate the fact or not, this reasoning is clearly nothing more than a direct appeal to the plutocrats now in power to disregard the fictions and forms of governmentalism, and resist by unorganized violence, by bombs and daggers, the organized violence of a State Socialistic government. Democracy is a fine thing only so long as Godkin's masters, the plutocrats, direct the counting of heads and enforce the will apparently expressed by the majority of the voting element. Law and order are then sacred; government is then synonymous with civilization itself; and any attempt to overrule the law by individuals or minorities is a heinous crime against society. The Vaillants and Henrys are miserable wretches, since they have the impudence and audacity to laugh at Godkinian morality and politics and to meet the organized force of plutocratic government by sporadic violence. When they intimate that they discover nothing in government except force, and that therefore they need have no hesitation about opposing their own force to it, Godkin is horrified and staggered by such heretical and savage sentiments. What! he exclaims; my government simply a thing of brute force! Have I not religion, political economy, metaphysics, philosophy, political science to support it by demonstrations of its absolute necessity and beneficence? My government has the sanction of divine and natural law; my system is rooted in human nature, and is the direct outcome of historical evolution. Only imbeciles and depraved criminals can think of making war upon it. All this, and more of this very familiar Godkinian protestation, whenever proletarian dynamiters organize violent demonstrations against Democracy.

Now observe the same Godkin under slightly changed political conditions. Democracy remains; the "right of suffrage" remains; government is as firm as ever; law and order are sternly upheld, — in short, nothing is altered except the complexion of the ruling majority. By the most legal, time-honored, historically-evolved parliamentary processes a State Socialist government is elected by the majority of the voters and duly proceeds to carry into execution the platform of the victorious majority. What the platform is matters little. Under Democracy the decree of the majority is final, and the minority is as bound to acquiesce in it as the political machinery called government is bound to put it in force. This is the patent, undoubted logic of Godkin's philosophy, politics, and morality. Yet what do we find Godkin's attitude to be in this contingency? Does he submit to his government? Far from it. The solemn, glib-tongued law-worshipper is transformed into a violent, shrieking, raving dynamiter. Damn your government! he cries. My property shall not be confiscated, and my friends shall not be turned out of power and deprived of their loaves and fishes. Votes, majorities, be hanged! We have the guns at the last resort. Counting heads no longer suits us; the game was delightful as long as we manipulated it and managed to make it profitable and amusing to ourselves. We have no use for it now; we resign; we call the thing off. The system was "provisional"; we gave it a "trial," and were content to continue it while it "worked well." It has ceased to work well, and we drop it. The old feudal system of breaking heads and plundering must be restored. Democracy is a failure; monarchy, military dictatorship, anything that will enable us to lord it over the rabble and make them work and fight for us is the system that, after all, appears to answer our purposes. We accordingly will revert to it. The violent Godkin has forgotten his religion, his constitutional science, his historical evolution, his human nature, his entire assortment of fine phrases, and brutally, frankly, openly shouts for war and rebellion.

But, alas! in his fury and excitement poor Godkin overlooks one most stubborn and unmistakable fact. He imagines that he can revert to government by head-breaking at his sweet will the moment Democracy ceases to please him. In this he is fatally in error. Plutocratic dynamiters will hardly fare better than proletarian dynamiters. The State Socialist government will know a thing or two, and the Godkins will find it rather difficult to resign and set up a government of head-breaking. Remember the great French Revolution, Godkin. Recall the incidents of the Paris Commune. Votes, poor Godkin, *will* mean guns under a State Socialist *régime*, and mean it perhaps more than now, since the indignation of the rabble will have a better foundation than that of present plutocratic rulers who are threatened by rebellion. If Godkin and his allies attempt "a lot of hanging" at any time, they will get more than a dose of their own medicine from the new political forces. After all, Godkin was not altogether wrong in his talk about human nature and historical evolution. There was some truth in it, — at least to the extent that the people *have* outgrown feudalism and direct rule of robbers and dictators, and that a reversion to feudalism is an impossible dream. State Socialism, it is true, is not the only alternative to the present system, but feudalism may be safely left out of consideration.

The Godkins, by their talk and action, tend to render a State Socialist *régime* more and more inevitable, for any violent reaction from their plutocracy must end in the establishment of a popular despotism; and this is one of the principal reasons why the true individualists, the lovers of freedom who want neither plutocratic or Communistic government, hate the Godkins even more than they are hated by the State Socialists. In fact, they deserve the gratitude of State Socialists for their powerful aid to the cause. The more the Godkins indulge in this sort of confessions, the more votes and guns the State Socialists may count on. Madness precedes and leads to destruction. Godkin is really committing suicide.

V. Y.

The Land Occupancy Problem.

To the Editor of Liberty:

Regarding your ten points against me in No. 304, —

(1) I used those figures to prove that perfect equality of economic opportunity could not be had under your scheme of land tenure, and especially to overthrow the theory by which Mr. Robinson tried, as I understood, to back the contrary view. I said at the same time that to find out how much the inequality is we must use real, not imaginary, statistics. Your position on this point, as now stated, is near enough to mine to pass without dispute as long as we have more radical differences to discuss.

(3) Mr. Robinson, who set this discussion going with the statement that it is important to show that we offer economic equality, is attacked in flank by his reinforcements.

I have no objection to accidentally benefiting another. If I am under a system by which my wages are half my product, I will welcome any improvement that by doubling my product doubles my wages, even though the thieves' share were doubled too. I might even be glad to see the product increased if the thieves got it all, leaving my wages stationary. It would be good for the thieves' innocent babies. But if I was kicking for my whole product before it was doubled, I should go on kicking for my whole product after it was doubled. And if I had had my whole product once, and been satisfied, and then saw that my product was increased, if the increase went into another

man's pockets, — then I should be likely to begin kicking, notwithstanding the desirability of accidental benefits to others.

(4) What I said was that the increase of population would increase the inequality arising from economic rent. I didn't know that was Malthusianism; but, whatever its name is, I do not see how it "militates as strongly against the Single Tax as against any other reformatory proposal," for the Single Tax surely undertakes to equalize the inequality resulting from rent, while some reformatory proposals (for instance, free silver coinage) do not.

I do not see why society, or any one acting with a view to the good of society, should ever do anything for the sake of violating equal liberty. An individual, or a number of individuals, may preserve life or health by invasive action, as by stealing food under special circumstances. But, so far as I see, it will always be for the advantage of society at large that theft be forbidden without any exception; at least, it will always be safer for society to follow that rule than to make exceptions. But the establishment of a system of land tenure, and the determination of its variations under any circumstances, must even in an Egoist community be the act of those who plan for the good of society at large, and expect to get their own reward through the general benefit to the society of which they are a part. Therefore, if they know their business, their courts will not decide against the law of liberty unless such a decision is for the good of society. Now, it may be socially desirable that I should shoot a panther at once; I may have no weapon but a shot-gun, and may be sure that the shot will in scattering kill an innocent man under the panther's paw. But then the end aimed at is the death of the invasive panther; the man's death is an undesired incident.

Again, quarantine may sometimes be desirable. But it seems to me that the man who brings disease germs where unsuspecting people will catch them is an invader, conscious or unconscious. And in quarantine the object is to repress the unconscious invaders whom we expect to find in the quarantined company; the restriction of the liberty of those who are not invaders is not aimed at, but accepted as an unavoidable incident of our police measures against invasion. But you say that the occupant of land is not therein an invader; yet you propose that, in case of necessity (which does not, as I understand, imply crime on his part), action be taken whose *aim* shall be to dispossess him. If you have any "puzzles" that show how invasion may be necessary in a case as clear as that, I want to see them.

(5) I think I could answer this now, but I prefer to make it an excuse for asking a question. If A builds a house, and rents it to B, who thereupon lives or works in it under the lease, will you regard A or B as the "occupier and user" of the land on which that house stands? When I know this, I will try to see about those drug-stores.

(6) You have sometimes, I think, spoken in favor of what you called "free vacant land." This phrase implies that occupied land is not free. You must then have used the word "free" to mean "open to be freely occupied by any comer." It was in this sense that I used the word when I said that your system would free no city land; and it is in this sense that any piece of land must be freed in order that its freeing may reduce rental values. Freeing the occupant from burdens will not do that.

(7) What I meant to apply the name "eminent domain" to was your principle of evicting occupants, contrary to the law of liberty as recognized by you, under the plea of a higher law of necessity.

(9) Now you bring in good faith. I suppose, in a suit to determine the title to land by occupancy, the question of good faith would be the question whether a man occupied his land for the sake of the use he was ostensibly making of it, or whether he was making that use for the sake of holding the title to the land, like the fence-builders described among the Beauties of Government in No. 305. I should hate to be on a jury to decide such a case; for I should expect to find, in any case where the land was not used nearly to its full capacity (and no other cases would come before the courts), that the two motives were mixed, and that not even the man himself could determine the proportion of mixture.

But it seems to me that the idea of good faith ought not to come in. The act that is invasive when done in bad faith is invasive when done in good faith. The man who does it in good faith is not to be punished as if he had acted in bad faith, but he is to be resisted without regard to his faith, unless we waive our rights through courtesy. Now, as I understand, you would regard the man who tries to hold land by a merely formal occupancy (the real motive being to hold the title for speculation, say) as an invader. Then his eviction will be justified as an act directed against invasion. But, surely, this eviction is the *resistance* of invasion, not the *punishment;* and therefore the justice of the eviction cannot depend on the occupant's good faith.

(10) I meant to say that limitation of area of ownership was a proposition commonly found in Stats Socialist company; I still believe it, though I cannot at this moment show evidence. You had suggested that idea as a proper general principle for the guidance of juries in normal cases, and your proposition that juries should sometimes act otherwise does not alter the fact that you thought they might well usually act so.

You say: "No man who believes in that [State Socialism] believes or can logically believe in an occupancy-and-use title. But very many men who believe in that accept and endorse (at least temporarily) the Single Tax." Logically or illogically, some State Socialists, and some half-way State Socialists, accept and endorse (at least temporarily) the occupancy-and-use title. E. P. Foster, Nationalist, now editor of the "Cincinnatian," wrote a letter to the "Voice" a year or two ago, I think, offering four planks on which all reformers should unite; this was one. In adopting the Federation of Labor platform at Denver, if every plank had a good majority, many of the same men must have voted for the occupancy-and-use plank and for some of decidedly State Socialist trend. So, too, in the Knights of Labor platform.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

(1) My criticism of Mr. Byington's figures was intended to emphasize, on the one hand, my dissent from the doctrine that liberty must be abandoned if it can be shown that it would not result in absolute equality, and on the other hand, Mr. Byington's admission that the extent of the inequality remaining under liberty cannot be measured by imaginary figures. I am confident that, but for my criticism and in spite of his admission, the impression would have been left upon the minds of many readers that Mr. Byington's imaginary figures were fairly indicative of the extent of the inequality complained of. This impression corrected, I cannot allow that more important differences remain to be discussed, for to me the *extent* of the inequality which liberty would not abolish is the most important aspect of the subject under consideration. If this inequality amounts to an unendurable tax upon the merely physical life of the laborer, then, if authority will correct it, authority must be employed, though liberty, and with it every hope of a higher life on earth, be thereby sacrificed.

(3) It was not my purpose to reinforce Mr. Robinson. On the contrary, I distinctly stated that I did not share his view. And I question whether he would reassert his view as strongly as before, — whether, indeed, he would go farther than to affirm, as I affirm, that the abolition of land monopoly would immediately lessen the existing inequality, and would have a strong and constant tendency, in connection with other forms of freedom, to lessen it still further.

By all means kick for your full product, Mr. Byington, and kick hard. I wish you to get it if you can, as I too wish to get mine. But I am not willing to pay too much for it. I am not willing to part with my liberty to get my full product, unless that part of my product which I do get is insufficient to keep me from starving. And even then I personally might prefer death; I do not know. Besides, Mr. Byington does not fairly represent his fellow Single-Taxers. He wants his own product, but *their* chief worry is because their product goes in part to a neighbor whom they hate, — the landlord; and they will be abundantly satisfied when it shall be taken from this hated neighbor and given to another whom they love, — the tax-collector.

(4) Mr. Byington said that, whatever relief might come from the opening of new mines, the needs of civilization would soon press upon the limits of these mines. This is simply a form of saying that, whatever new opportunities may be opened for labor, the tendency of population to outstrip the means of subsistence is sure to ultimately neutralize them. That is Malthusianism; and, if it is true, all economic reforms, including the Single Tax, are a delusion and a snare.

I have not urged that society should make any exceptions in favor of the man who commits an invasion under circumstances that go far to excuse him. That would be a matter entirely for the jury. If I were on a jury to try the case of a man who had stolen bread when starving, I would vote in favor of a formal penalty, too light to be burdensome, and yet sufficient to stamp the act as invasive.

In his vain endeavor to escape the disagreeable but simple conclusion that necessity knows no law, Mr. Byington offers some queer logic. First, he bases himself upon the perfectly correct proposition that courts, even in an Egoistic community, will not decide against liberty, however great the emergency, unless such a decision would be for the good of society. Next he tells us that the courts, in justifying quarantine, would punish non-invaders in order to detect and punish invaders, because such action is for the good of society. These two propositions lay a foundation for a conclusion. After reading them, I fully expected that Mr. Byington would next claim that, supposing land-occupancy *per se* to be non-invasive, the occupant would in no emergency be ousted by the courts, because such action would never be for the good of society. Of course, such a conclusion would have been pointless against my contention; for I have not hinted that any non-invasive occupant should be ousted, except in an emergency where imperative social necessity commands it. But, however pointless, such a conclusion would have had some connection with Mr. Byington's premises. Yet this is not the conclusion that he actually draws. Instead of it, he offers this: that, supposing land-occupancy *per se* to be non-invasive, the occupant would in no emergency be ousted by the courts, because he commits no crime. With the first premise this conclusion has no connection at all. As for the second premise, it leads rather to the opposite conclusion. For the passenger who enters a harbor on a steamer with no germs of disease about his person commits no crime. Yet, by Mr. Byington's premise, he may be invaded for the good of society. Evidently, then, the fact that the land-occupant commits no crime does not exempt him from invasion for the good of society. Unless Mr. Byington can improve his argument, there is no call for me to propound any

puzzles. The simple fact is this, — that necessity, and only necessity, may excuse the coercion of the innocent. Now, necessity knows no law, and it knows no "aims"; it does not inquire whether the coercion to be exercised will be direct or indirect, incidental or essential; it just coerces, whether or no, and because it cannot do otherwise.

(5) I would regard B as the occupant and user of the land on which the house stands, and as *the owner of the house itself*. Now let us hear about the drug-stores.

(6) I do not know whether I have ever spoken of "free vacant land" or not. In any case it is an ill-chosen phrase. I believe that all vacant land should be free in Mr. Byington's sense of the word, — that is, open to be freely occupied by any comer. I believe that all occupied land should be free in my sense of the word, — that is, enjoyed by the occupant without payment of tribute to a non-occupant. Whether the achievement of these two freedoms will tend to reduce rental values we shall know better when Mr. Byington has "seen about those drug-stores."

(7) In this sense I declare my willingness to stand for eminent domain. But I insist that Mr. Byington does not, as he claims, get rid of eminent domain, but on the contrary gives it the most rigorous and universal application, when he proposes to exact from each land-occupant a portion of his product under penalty of eviction.

(9) Very well; I accept Mr. Byington's amendment. I think myself that it is better to exclude the matter of good faith. It is simpler and truer to say that any man who uses his land for the commission of a plainly invasive act may be dispossessed and treated as a criminal. If the act committed is of a doubtful character, then the same rule applies here that applies to all other doubtful cases: that is, the troublesome party should be given the benefit of the doubt, either until his course becomes clearly invasive, when he should be dispossessed as an invader, or until it becomes a peremptory menace to the community's safety, when he should be dispossessed in the name of necessity, though it be still doubtful whether he is an invader.

(10) If Mr. Byington simply means to say that not all of the believers in the occupancy-and-use doctrine are thorough-going Anarchists, I quite agree with him. But many of them, perhaps most of them, are; whereas not one of them is a thoroughgoing State Socialist. If Mr. E. P. Foster believes that the title to land should be vested in the individual occupant, then he does not believe in State administration of the means of production, — that is, he is not a Nationalist. Let Mr. Byington refer the matter to any one of the men whom the State Socialists rely on for their philosophy. Let him ask Bernard Shaw, or Bebel, or Engels, or Guesde, or Gronlund. Each one of them would hotly repudiate the occupancy-and-use doctrine, and declare it anti-Socialistic. As for the Denver convention, Mr. Byington could not have chosen a better illustration for my purpose. The occupancy-and-use plank was substituted for Plank Ten, and the battle waged between these two as diametrical opposites. The State Socialists, to a man, voted for Plank Ten, while all others in the convention voted for occupancy-and-use, except a few trade-unionists who either voted for Plank Ten or did not vote at all because of their declared unwillingness to vote for an Anarchistic plank. Perhaps there are some State Socialists who believe in a "union of reform forces", at any price, and who accordingly offer to favor the Anarchistic solution of the land question if the Anarchists in return will favor the State Socialistic solution of the machinery question. Such an offer as this, however, while it would literally sustain Mr. Byington's statement that the occupancy-and-use doctrine is "found in State Socialist company," would at the same time emphasize the truth that the State Socialists recognize its Anarchistic character.

T.

The Interest Question Narrowed to a Point.

To the Editor of Liberty:

To your question: "Is the desire to borrow money at less than one per cent. instead of more than four per cent. a sufficient consideration to induce business men to form such banks as I have described?" I answer: Yes! unquestionably, so far as the borrowers are concerned.

Having thus released myself from the unilateral inquest, I will add that, had you not excluded from the subject the lender, an equal factor with the borrower and complementary to him, I could not have made the answer you sought. Banks deal in "evidences of debt." They sell as well as buy credits. Indeed, they "create them out of nothing" to sell and exchange for other credits, and buy them back to decreate into nothing again. Fiat credit is possible, not fiat money. To obtain four or more per cent. interest is, therefore, an inducement of equal strength with the one you describe, and cancels it. Interest at zero would leave the formation of your banks economically motiveless. Otherwise, they would have been formed long ago. Col. W. B. Greene informed me forty-five years since that he was pressed by borrowers to form his mutual bank, but found no lenders, except a few philanthropists who would lend their money without interest anyway, and these he was unwilling to risk sacrificing in an untried experiment. The member who had more capital than he could use would have the same desire for a high rate as the one who had less would have for a low rate. The member with no more capital than he could use, and all that he could use, would be wholly indifferent to the rate, high or low, because he would get back in dividends all he paid out in discounts, less expense of the business, and no more. The members of all classes, contemplating lending to outsiders, would desire a high rate, and so turn the scale in favor of the high rate.

The great Rochdale Association found it impracticable to sell their goods at cost, and so adopted the method of selling at the market price and dividing the profits among the members or adding to their capital. The mutual banks would find the same difficulty in selling their credits, and would doubtless adopt the same method of charging the current rate of interest, making dividends according to capital invested. None but members could borrow at cost, or get their discounts returned in dividends.

What banking would be under industrial and commercial freedom can be foretold, I think, with some degree of certainty. What Anarchy would be under organized bank rule, mutualistic or otherwise, is as difficult to foresee as what government itself will become under our present plutocratic *régime*.

By what I have said I am not to be understood as affirming that *some* payments of interest may not be escaped, for they are now, and the costs as well, through forbearance of creditors, bankrupt acts, and other devices, honest or fraudulent. What I do mean is that in a general way interest is unescapable, like rent, profit, or taxes. The only question is whether comrades and governments shall enforce the economic or the monopolistic principle. While we have laws to enforce rent, interest, or profit-bearing contracts, other than as to the matters of *equity*, there is no safety for the debtor.

Whether your positions or mine have been sustained, or whether we are mutually progressing on converging lines toward the point where they coincide, can be of only personal interest. What the readers of Liberty are interested in knowing is whether Anarchy is to take along with it into the coming era rack-rent, evictions, mortgages, foreclosures, and the forces and methods of invasive power, in defiance of the public good, the economics and Isonomics of social science.

GLENORA, N. Y. J. K. INGALLS.

With apology to Mr. Ingalls for my persistence, I must continue the "unilateral inquest" a little further, regretting that I have not been relieved from doing so by an unequivocal answer to my last question. The qualified answer that Mr. Ingalls gives is this: The desire to borrow at less than one per cent. is a sufficient motive to business men as borrowers to induce them to embark in mutual banking, but the desire to lend at more than four per cent. is a sufficient motive to business men as lenders to keep them from embarking in mutual banking. Now I must ask for answers to the following questions:

(1) Does the business man who has capital but lacks cash — that is, the business man who wishes to borrow — sacrifice, by engaging with others in mutual banking, any opportunity of lending (at four per cent. or any other rate) which he enjoys before so engaging?

(2) If so, what?

(3) If not; if the business man in question, by embarking with others in mutual banking, does not thereby damage himself as lender, — is not the desire to borrow at less than one per cent. a sufficient consideration to induce him to so embark?

I respectfully insist on answers to these questions. Mr. Ingalls is a very able and sincere writer on economic problems. He deservedly exercises an influence on the class of people to whom Liberty appeals. Repeatedly during its publication he has come forward with a denial of the position that mutual banking will make it possible to borrow money without interest. I have now determined to force him, once and for all, to make good this denial by proof, or else to retract it. Only by refusing to answer me can he avoid a choice between these two courses; and, as he is an eminently frank and honest man, he will not refuse to answer me. When he has acknowledged his error, or by his answers has forced me to acknowledge mine, I will discuss with him the other points which he raises, and especially the extraordinary statement which he attributes to Colonel Greene.

T.

The Justice of Interest.

To the Editor of Liberty:

Mr. Bilgram's rejoinder in Liberty of January 12, 1895, is about as evasive a piece of writing as could possibly be produced.

(1) When he has been shown that a man is a fool who buys bank-notes for which he has no use, and who continues to hold them for twelve months while he might have claimed their value in fruitful wealth, but that at the same time those may be convenienced who leave in a banker's hands that portion of their wealth which they judge it needful to keep in the most saleable form (money) and prefer to hold it symbolically by means of the banker's notes, Mr. Bilgram draws the mistaken and unfair inference that both these classes of note-holders are proved to be equally foolish.

(2) When he is shown that certain factories are idle because the owners cannot calculate upon any gain from working them, he wrongly and unfairly infers that these people are shown to be foolish for keeping unemployed their actual and real capital, while the

essential fact is that such factories are, for the time they are incapable of profitable employment, neither wealth or capital, but represent merely such fraction of their original value or cost as they would fetch if broken up and sold for old material.

(3) It is very smart of Mr. Bilgram to assume that exchanges demonstrate an equation of the values of the articles exchanged, but the equation is only manifested at the point where articles cease to exchange. Exchanging is a mode of motion. Water at a dead level does not flow; an equipoised scale beam is very different from a moving lever where there must be a power applied *greater* than mere equipoise in order to overcome the inertia of the body to be moved and of the mechanism. Each party to an exchange must recognize a greater value *to himself* in what he buys than in what he sells. If Mr. Bilgram can disprove this, he had better do it by analysis than beg the question by a sneer.

(4) It is ridiculous of Mr. Bilgram to shuffle out of the question as to whether the borrower of notes pays interest to the banker for the notes as such, or whether he does not economically and virtually pay interest as hire for the horse or other commodity he buys with the notes. It is rather paltry of Mr. Bilgram to pretend that it was alleged that there is any difference between England and America upon this point. And it is shallow to confound between the vendor of the commodities purchased with the borrowed notes (even if he is so foolish as to hoard them uselessly) and the person who pays the interest. The banker, in lending his promises and holding gold idle to meet them, virtually lends commodities, and for these he is paid hire in the form of interest. Those who sell horses for notes are in the majority of cases and in marginal cases those who use a part of their wealth as a capital in the operation of distributing horses, and upon this capital, whether momentarily invested in horseflesh, gold, or rights to credit by bankers, they look for and obtain interest.

(5) A farmer who gratuitously and voluntarily allows a banker to make interest upon wealth which he might claim from the banker and use profitably cannot be said to acquiesce in any currency laws, because the currency laws allow him to cash the notes on demand, and it is his own unrestrained act which is foolish. Some people are actually convenienced by lending money to bankers without obtaining interest, and holding notes or a credit in current account. Those who do this for their own convenience and profit in some other way are not like the foolish farmer who sells a useful horse for useless notes.

(6) It is only in the foregoing sense that bankers in England or elsewhere pay interest to the holders of their notes. The English government makes a man who lends it one shilling by holding a postal order pay twopence per year per shilling, or sixteen and two-thirds per cent. per annum, for allowing it the use of his money, and yet there are many cases where it is convenient thus to pay interest upon what one lends instead of upon what one borrows.

There is nothing whatever in Mr. Bilgram's rejoinder to undermine in the slightest the contention that interest is a fair and natural recompense to a lender for a deprivation of a gratification for a portion of his life which he can never recall. He blinks this question. If he knows of a reply to it, he is parsimonious of his wisdom and means to keep it to himself.

The most serious flaw, however, in the whole argument against interest put forward by Mr. Bilgram, mutual bankists, and others, is that they constantly assume that the cases where interest is paid upon borrowed money, not by a percentage upon the principal, but by a convenience, constitute a substantial proportion of the whole borrowing of the world, and that they could be extended so as to embrace borrowing in general. It is not at all unusual for bankers to borrow at interest. Banking upon funds which ought to be held for note-conversion is dangerous. But aside from all this is the fact that the capital of railway companies, docks, canals, factories, and works, and their borrowings, are conspicuously not composed of money, but merely enumerated in money, and are subject to fluctuations in monetary value from which money is exempt. The capital and borrowings of private persons and small traders are likewise essentially not monetary. The transition of loans through the monetary phase has nothing whatever to do with the payment or the rate of interest. Interest is paid by the user of commodities for the use of the commodities and received by the owner of the commodities or their equivalent wealth for the privation of the absence and non-use of these or other values of equal amount. The value of all the money or its symbols in circulation is far less than that of the useful productive capital of the world. This, when used by its owners, yields pleasure direct or profit; when lent, it yields interest.

It is pitiable to see so many Anarchists pursuing the will o' the wisp of interest-abolition. It is no grievance imposed by the State. Socialists who would throw all finance upon the State imagine that their communistic contrivances would abolish interest. Why some Anarchists should follow in this delusion is inconceivable, and that they do so is most injurious to their cause.

Yours, &c.,

J. Greevz Fisher.

Chapel Allerton, January 24, 1895.

Rejoinder.

Is it possible that Mr. Fisher still fails to see the incongruity and absurdity of his position?

If the readers of Liberty will look back and read the question I had put to my opponent, they will find that I took care to show that the farmer of my illustration was virtually the representative of those among whom the notes were circulating during the year. But, while Mr. Fisher is perverting the spirit of my question and is vigorously threshing empty straw, he is exceedingly careful not to answer it; he fails to show by which *action* the banker had *earned* the $25.

If my opponent were acquainted with the modern theory of value, he would know that the rate-of-exchange of commodities is determined by a comparison of the *marginal* utilities of the commodities exchanged; intermarginal utilities, which are esteemed higher and which have no effect upon the rate of exchange, cannot, therefore, account for any profit arising from exchange. The horse of my illustration was assumed to be worth, originally, $500, with an annual loss, due to aging, of $100, the period of probable usefulness having been assumed to be five years. On the basis of the modern theory, the value of the horse is accounted for as follows: The marginal valuation of the pleasure derived from the use of the horse (for five years, its average period of usefulness) exceeds the cost of food and attendance by $500, or $100 per year. If the *marginal* estimation of this pleasure were greater, the value of the horse would at once rise; the market value indicates with certainty the marginal valuation. The value of the service rendered by one year's loan of the horse is accordingly precisely equal to $100 (loss of value by aging) plus cost of food and attendance. Yet S was obliged to pay $25 more for one year's hire: in the first illustration, to F; in the second, to B. To be sure, S estimated the pleasure higher than $100; otherwise he would have done without the horse rather than pay more. But this cannot explain why he was obliged to pay more than the market value, since not the inter-marginal, but the marginal utility determines the rate of exchange, and the loan of the horse for one year is virtually a sale of one-fifth of the entire usefulness of the horse. Of course, Mr. Fisher is free to argue that a hungry man will pay for bread more than its market value, and that this excess is the power that must be applied, "*greater* than mere equipoise, in order to overcome the inertia"; but I fancy few thinking men will be satisfied with this "theory of interest." A more rational explanation must be rendered to make it acceptable. In order to buy the horse, S must have money, if he does not happen to have commodities acceptable to F in barter. Farmer F, and the people generally, are willing to accept properly-assured promises (bank-notes) as money; but it does not suit the banker B that the promissory notes of S shall be so used. He has managed to have laws passed that forbid the circulation, as currency, of the notes of S, however well secured, and has obtained an exclusive privilege to have his notes pass as currency. Owing to this exclusive right, B is enabled to collect a royalty in the form of interest on the loan of bank-notes. Such a loan is virtually a temporary exchange of promissory notes. S handed to B his note for $500, a note which by law is incapacitated from being used as money, while B handed to S his notes for $500, which by the same law are permitted to pass as currency. And for this temporary exchange, lasting for one year, S paid to B $25. It was tacitly understood that for the amount involved the credit of S was equal to that of B; for, if the payment of the $25 in question had been made to secure B against the risk of loss, owing to the inferior credit of S, this payment would have been in the nature of an insurance, and, if a fair equivalent of the risk assumed by B, its justice could not be questioned. But, although insurance against risk is as a rule present in gross interest, it is by economic writers recognized as "insurance" and not as "interest"; it is not capable of rendering to the lender a persistent net-income; it is not that which I had stigmatized as inequitable; it is not that which Mr. Fisher has attempted to justify. The credit of S being thus conclusively equal to that of B, there is nothing that can account for the payment of interest save the advantage which monetized credit possesses over credit which by law is prevented from being used as currency. The interest paid by S to B was paid because of the special and exclusive privilege enjoyed by B; it was a monopoly price; it was an inequitable acquisition.

It can now be readily seen why the extra pay of $25 must be rendered to F in the event of S hiring instead of buying the horse. The farmer, being in need of money, will obtain such if a sale is made; but, if the horse is hired and not sold, he must borrow the money and pay interest. He is then at a disadvantage of $25 per year, and will prefer selling to hiring, unless he obtains $25 extra.

But for the interest-bearing power of money the farmer would have had every reason to be satisfied with $100; for, had he himself enjoyed the use of the horse, he would, at the end of the year, have had a horse worth only $400, — *i. e.*, capable of rendering only four years' additional service, — he having consumed one-fifth of the entire usefulness of the horse. By loaning for $100, he would have had, at the end of the year, a full equivalent of the usefulness he had possessed at the beginning of the year.

The above explanation of interest is so simple and so rational that there is no need for assuming a loss of pleasure resulting from a mere *delay* in consuming wealth (*abstinence* being a misnomer employed to concealing a falsehood); or for inventing the alleged philosopher's stone usually termed "productivity of capital," which has been shown to be a meaningless phrase by Professor Boehm-Bawerk in his admirable work, "Capital and Interest," of which at least the first volume, "History and Critique of the Theory of Interest," is remarkably free from the usual errors committed by economic writers; or to assume an inequality of exchange that will account for a power "greater than equipoise in order to overcome inertia"; or to resort to the sophistry of contending that interest is paid to those who furnish the money, and not to those who furnish capital in exchange for money; or to any of the other subterfuges to which the defenders of the modern system of exploitation resort.

The theory of interest has in the foregoing been briefly reiterated for the benefit of those readers of Liberty who have not closely followed this protracted discussion. I have no hope that it will make any impression on Mr. Fisher, whose conception of logic is radically different from mine.

Hugo Bilgram.

[This controversy closes here. Mr. Fisher has been given an ample hearing, and nothing is to be gained by further reiteration. It is for the reader to judge between the arguments that have been advanced.—Editor Liberty.]

Tolstoi on Compulsory Vaccination.

Count Leo Tolstoi has written as follows to Mr. William Tebb, of Rede Hall, Burstow, Surrey, England, on the subject of vaccination: "I greatly sympathize with your work against compulsory vaccination, as I do with every struggle for liberty in any sphere of life whatever. The obligation of parents to let their children be subjected to operations deemed necessary by doctors seems to me as great an outrage as the obligation of parents to subject their children to school-teaching imposed upon them by the government which in its tendency may be opposed to their views. I wish you success in your work, and should be happy if I could have opportunity of helping you in it."

The Politician.

Statesman, when from your eagle height —
The voters' ranks at your command —
You do not mould the law aright,
But under it the faction-fight,
By unfair legislation fanned,
Grows fiercer until blood is spilt,
No sophistry will cover it.
You are the cause and yours the guilt;
It is manslaughter you commit.

Meddler, when, by your eloquence
And gift of falsehood, you can draw
The masses from their own defence,
Daze them, and crush their common sense,
And take their very bread by law,
Till some go down to suicide,
No casuistry smothers it!
Vile, treacherous friend and faithless guide,
'Tis murder, *murder* you commit.

Tyrant, when from your edict grim
Springs poverty, so sad, so dire,
That, forced to chill starvation's rim,
Fair, modest women seek Hell's brim
To kill love, virtue, health, with fire,
And, trembling, yield their happiness,
The stern Avenger points to you —
You — with the power to curse or bless.
'Tis rape and violence you do.

Knaves, when, to ease Ambition's itch,
You needs must pander to the mob,
Its patriotic heart bewitch,
And, just your own cause to enrich,
Astutely teach it how to rob,
Then, while man strips his fellow-man,
The stern Avenger points to you.
Explain, defend it as you can,
'Tis theft and burglary you do.

Statesman, knave, tyrant, meddler, fool,
I would not *dare* the risk to take;
For I am of an older school,
Nor ever can I be the tool
Of those who slaves and weaklings make.
The victim I — but time moves on.
The stern Avenger looks at you.
You — horrible to gaze upon,
While murder, rape, and theft you do.

William Walstein Gordak.

Pensioners and Paupers.

An old soldier bitterly objects to my reference to "pauperizing pensions," in the "Twentieth Century" of January 3. Having received a little money from the pension system during the past thirty years, the old soldier feels that it has been a benefit to him, and, naturally enough, defends the system warmly.

But, in examining the good or bad qualities of a national system which affects the interests of seventy million people, we must pay some attention to the people who are profoundly injured by it as well as to those who fancy it has been beneficial to themselves; we must consider, not only that pensions are going to some men who need public assistance, but that *many of the largest pensions are going to the men who do not need, and who ought to be ashamed to accept, such public assistance.* We must also reflect that, though pensions are going into the hands of a few old or disabled men who really did risk their lives, they are also going to soldiers who ran no risk whatever; to men who even earned more, with their pay as substitutes, than they ever earned elsewhere; to men and women who did not even smell the battle from afar, and to men and women who were only distant relatives, or no relatives at all, of the soldiers.

We must also consider that the one hundred and fifty-eight millions of dollars annually extracted from this present generation to be handed over to the all sorts and conditions of men and women above referred to is now money taken from working-people who had nothing to do with the quarrel that brought on the war, or with resolving to have a war. The people who were responsible for the war are mostly dead. They were exactly like two men, or two debating societies of men, who should, in discussing a principle, lose their tempers, rush into the streets shrieking with rage, and rouse a lot of ignorant people to pitch into each other in order to settle which side had been reasoning correctly!

A "nation" is simply a congregation of families, of individuals. (If we bear this truth in mind, we shall be able to slough off a good many of our political superstitions, — such as notions about "insults to our flag," occasions for war, justice of paying pensions, etc.) There is no reason why we should countenance, or continue to endorse, any sort of conduct in the name of the nation which we should frown down or condemn in two families or two individuals. If the two men (imagined above) had not only upset the business of the community, stirred up wrath, malice, and all uncharitableness, destroyed many of the noblest and best of the citizens, ruined homes, wrecked happiness, familiarized little children with brutal bloodshed, burdened sober working-people with their support and that of their followers, while they fought like wild beasts, and extorted money from the workers to be worse than wasted in weapons for killing each other, — if two men had, not only carried on such a performance, but had started a fashion of continuing such tribute for thirty years after their quarrel was ended, what would be our comment, both upon the quarrellers and the stupid people who stupidly continued paying tribute?

I think any dispassionate, reasonable person would say: This idiotic fashion has got to be weeded out — root and branch.

There was only one excuse for our family quarrel, misleadingly referred to as our "civil war." There never is but one excuse for any family quarrel which comes to blows. Two brothers who involve all their brothers in cutting off heads, arms, or legs as the outcome of a discussion as to what is, or is not, a proper course of conduct are two ignoramuses, belonging to a family of fools, or savages.

A fool is a person who cannot think; a savage is a person who can think only a little. Truly civilized men are beings governed by reason, and who settle all disputes by use of reason. The excuse for our family quarrel was that we were largely a family of fools and savages, — that is, of shallow thinkers. No truly civilized man ever endorses civil war. He may be swept into it in self-defence by the mad stampede of fools and savages (as thousands were thirty years ago). But he loathes and despises it, as a civilized man must despise the blind battles of maddened brutes; he is ashamed of his share in it, and he wants to wipe out its memory as quickly as possible. If he is, also, a practical and energetic man, he will use his utmost endeavors to put a stop to its sentimental, foolish, or evil consequences.

And this brings us back to pensions. Many excellent people have accepted and used pensions who would have died rather than touch them had they comprehended what a pension really means. The practice of doling out pensions began in the Dark Ages, when people did not understand nice distinctions. Two men, of equal native capacities, might be seen working as citizens of the same country, — one a mere destroyer and consumer; the other a builder and producer, who, of course, had to support both himself and the destroyer. When health failed these two, so that one could neither destroy or even begin to produce, and the other could no longer continue to produce, other workers were obliged to support both, as idle consumers, to the end of their lives, simply because the soldier had not chosen to save his share of the money wrung from the producer, and the producer, burdened with the soldier, could save nothing.

Now, it is an incontrovertible truth that a man (or woman) who lives at the expense of another is a dependent, or, in plain words, a pauper. But, during those Dark Ages, when the "gentlemen" who fought (like fools and savages) were yet better-educated and shrewder-witted citizens than the patiently-toiling, illiterate workingmen who supported them, the ex-soldier-pauper invented a name for himself different from that imposed upon the ex-worker-pauper. Even if we grant that the services of the soldier were of such value to all that all should take care of him to the end of his life, the services of the laborer must be conceded to have been of equal value; for the soldier would have perished of starvation had it not been for the worker. Yet, in those Dark Ages, no one thought of the quiet, unpretentious, persistent toil of the worker as being of equal value with the service of the soldier. His possible claim to "honorable past service" was not recognized. *In his case, alone, were the humiliation and degradation of dependence upon strangers recognized in its truly degrading character.* He was openly labelled Pauper, and the thing pauperism became so ingrained and associated with official inquisition and loss of freedom and self-respect that to this day men continue to commit suicide rather than become paupers.

But so great was the glamor cast about everything connected with war in the Dark Ages of savagery that all society coöperated in glorifying the ex-soldier. Like hypnotized subjects who look at water in two glasses, and pronounce water to be water in the one glass, but declare that water is wine in the other, — though both glasses are alike and filled from the same pitcher, — just so society, hypnotized by long gazing at false ideals, christened the dependent ex-soldier a pensioner, but the dependent ex-laborer a pauper! Yet in vain does society endeavor to preserve the glamor over the soldier in this age of reason. In vain do we try to persuade ourselves that dependence upon many people who are strangers to us is anything else than pauperism, call it what name we may. Thousands of our ex-soldiers have refused to accept, or to make claim to, such public assistance, having detected its true character.

While it would be manifestly unjust to cut off, at one blow, pensions now going to old soldiers who are crippled and helpless, it ought to be manifestly just, in the estimation of every thinker, that not a single new pension shall ever be issued on account of a war ended thirty years ago. Laboring men and reformers have expended a good deal of force in denunciations of "the sharks" of Wall street, of the gamblers in bonds and mortgages, and so on. It would be well worth their while to turn a little of this force against the pension "sharks," whom labor is supporting, and also against the system which makes such sharks possible.

By a "pension shark" I mean the trickster who uses ex-soldiers and their relatives, throughout every legal degree of remotest kinship, as catspaws to pull a share of the public's money into his own pocket. I will cite two cases, out of many under my own observation, which will illustrate what I mean. In the first instance, the "shark" went to a strong, able-bodied colored woman, about seven years ago, and offered to secure a pension for her on the score of some sort of kinship to a dead soldier, if she would promise to give him half of what he gained by using her name and possible claim. Of course, the simple creature readily consented, being as bidable in the hands of the wily shark as the cat in the grasp of the cunning monkey. But the evil of perverting the hard-earned money of labor into the pocket of an unscrupulous trickster was not the only evil. Up to that time the woman had been a sensible, industrious worker, perfectly able and entirely willing to earn her own living. The very prospect of the pension turned her head. She gave up her situation instantly, as the sum named seemed a fortune to her, and began to borrow money, on her prospects, from her colored relatives, visiting round, from house to house, as a lady of great expectations. The pauperizing effect in that instance was instantaneous.

In the second case, it was nearly as speedy, and came under my observation about the same time. The widow of a soldier had managed to support herself and two boys until each had become self-supporting. From the moment that a pension shark told her she was entitled to about three thousand dollars of back pay and a regular monthly income, the efforts of the whole family were relaxed, and their minds unsettled by visions of what they would do with it; and, as the matter dragged, they too fell into pauperism, accepting city relief aid, church poor-fund aid, and any other aid they could get, always apologizing for it as a thing temporary, to be discontinued when the pension question should be settled.

But, bad as the cases of needless pension-giving to women and sharks are, they are but a small part of the evil. Every intelligent person knows that political sharks have effected wholesale, needless pension-giving as a bid for the wholesale vote of ex-soldiers. Common sense should show us that, the farther we get from the war, the smaller should be the pension list, as those who were orphan children at the close of

the war are now men and women; and ex-soldiers and widows who had managed to live without pensions during twenty years might reasonably have been expected to continue their self-dependence. But the truth is that nothing is so provocative of conscienceless greed, of loss of self-respect, of loss of energy and ingenuity in self-maintenance, as publishing to any mass of ignorant people that they have a chance to get money from "the government." Hence it is that the sum is rising at the rate of twenty millions a year. In such a scramble it is almost invariably the wrong person who gets a grab.

Public opinion should persuade every pensioner to consider pension-taking as a thing to be ashamed of, to be accepted only as an alternative to starvation, and to be got rid of as speedily as possible.

ELLEN BATTELLE DIETRICK.

William Carr Crofts.

[Wordsworth Donisthorpe in Personal Rights.]

The death of William Carr Crofts is an irreparable loss, not only to his friends, but to his political allies. His place at the office of the Liberty and Property Defence League cannot be filled up. Having known him from the cradle to the grave, and worked with him (as it were, in double harness) for over fifteen years, I should wish to put on record my impressions of a man who was in all respects remarkable, and more especially to vindicate his memory from a charge which has of late years been frequently brought against him.

The most noticeable thing about Crofts was his thoroughness. Whatever he put his hand to, he did it with all his might. As a boy, he played a strong forward at football, and he was in the Rugby School first eleven at cricket. At Merton, Oxford, he applied himself to philosophy with such avidity as to neglect scholarship, and so to disappoint the expectations of those who predicted for him a high place in the Classical Tripos. He could not and would not "cram." At an early age he showed great power as an artist, and, if he had taken up painting as a profession, he would certainly have rivalled his distinguished brother, Ernest Crofts, A.R.A. And, in fact, when he afterwards became a student of architecture, he showed such promise that he was entrusted by some of our leading architects with the superintendence of buildings of acknowledged merit, and his architectural drawings found a place in the Royal Academy Exhibition. He studied for the bar, and, although prevented by circumstances from reaching his "call," he was a shrewd and practical lawyer and a wise adviser. When he inherited a share in a large textile fabric manufacturing business in the North of England, he mastered all the details and intricacies of the several processes, beginning at the bottom; and it was his modest boast that he would sort wool against any old hand.

His two chief faults (and perhaps his only faults) were hypertrophied virtues. His immense industry and methodical precision made him intolerant of laziness and carelessness in his subordinates, and he became somewhat of a martinet. And such was his caution that it finally developed into suspiciousness. As a conversationist, he was genial and correct, but not brilliant, and his humor was too quaint and dry to be styled wit. He was possessed of a clear logical faculty, a good memory, and singular patience: hence he was one of those rarest of teachers, — a good listener. His mode of argument was to get inside his interlocutor's mind, and see through his eyes. He was, therefore, though without rhetorical power, exceedingly convincing and persuasive. And his syllogisms, even on ordinary topics, were always flawless.

Beneath a courteous, but rather frigid, exterior there beat a warm and affectionate heart, — a heart physically, alas! too weak for the work imposed upon it. Frugal and thrifty, he was, nevertheless, according to his means, very generous, and always ready to give of his limited time, energy, and wealth to his friends. He smoked little, drank less, and never allowed himself any recreation, — no amusements, no games, no sports. In short, he was altogether too abstemious. He died, still unmarried, at the age of forty-eight, on the 26th of November, of heart disease inherited from his grandfather — and mine.

And now for the unfair imputation which has latterly been cast upon him by *quondam* coadjutors in the cause of democracy and true Liberalism. He has been accused of inconsistency in his Individualism, and even of dry-rot Toryism. There could be no greater mistake. He was, to the last, an ardent Democrat and Republican. The fact is, the sins of the League were (not unnaturally, perhaps) visited upon the secretary. The League, it was said, resisted all State-interferences with the liberty of landowners, of pawnbrokers, of water companies, and, in short, of monopolists and property owners of every description; but never a finger did it raise against State-interferences with personal rights, such as are embodied in the vaccination acts, laws bolstering up State religion, and the representation of privilege in parliament. In the matter of the drink traffic, the League has appeared as counsel for the publican, and only in a secondary degree for the public. These charges are true as against the League, but absolutely false as against its secretary.

Let me prove my case by documentary evidence, which admits of no dispute. The League was established in 1881, under the name of State Resistance Union; and it was with the utmost reluctance and misgiving that Crofts and myself were induced by Lord Wemyss (then Lord Elcho) to throw overboard what may be called the Liberal wing of the movement. We did so, first, because we found it impossible at the time to amalgamate the two sections, and hoped to effect a reconciliation later on; and, secondly, because we thought the left wing was already well represented by the Personal Rights Association, with whom we hoped at some future date to bring about a complete union. Even this concession was not made without protest. I will put in a letter, written by Crofts and myself to Lord Wemyss, six months before the League was rechristened and established on a restricted basis:

"Before concluding, we would venture to point out a certain danger attending this mutilation of the party, by eliminating those sections whose sympathies are generally supposed to be with the Radical Party, and by retaining only so-called monopolists — such as landowners, householders, licensed victuallers, railway companies, large capitalists, and employers of labor; the danger, namely, of giving a decidedly Tory complexion to the 'new party' in the eyes of the public; and the further danger of ultimate absorption and extinction in the Conservative party."

This retrograde act resulted at once in our losing the support of Lord Derby, Mr. Auberon Herbert, Sir Roland Wilson, Mr. P. A. Taylor, and many other influential statesmen and men of letters. Even Mr. Herbert Spencer held aloof from us for six years, until "Jus" showed that true Liberalism was not unrepresented on the direction of the League. Said Lord Derby: "In you personally I have every faith; but I foresee that the party you are likely to call into existence will carry you in a direction which you yourselves would be the first to deplore." His foresight was justified. Mr. P. A. Taylor wrote: "But what can Lord Elcho and I have in common? A son of Lord Salisbury said the other day, 'let lords and workmen unite.' On this basis we save the land for the peerage, and preserve the beer for the people. Is *that* to be our basis?" Sir Roland Wilson wrote: "I fear that a perusal of the memorandum disinclines me for even passive membership in the kind of society which appears now to be contemplated. The 'more restricted basis' now spoken of is doubtless not deliberately intended to be a basis of class selfishness, but it presents to my eyes an unpleasantly close resemblance thereto." Lord Pembroke wrote: "How can such an association succeed unless by the support of men whose true Liberalism is above suspicion?"

Mr. H. C. Stephens wrote: "I hope we shall stick to the fine title, *Liberty League:* with that and *the ribund* we may touch other feelings than those directly connected with the breeches-pocket." And so on; and so on. Whereupon Crofts returned to the charge, and, in a letter to Lord Elcho, dated February 17, 1882, referring to an article which had appeared in the Bradford "Observer," said: "The tone of the article fairly represents the suspicion entertained by Liberals throughout the country that the present movement is a piece of Conservative wire-pulling, and we would venture again to impress upon your lordship the desirability of counteracting this misapprehension, by the admission into the union of those sections of the harassed minorities whose sympathies are notoriously Radical."

But it was not to be. Up went the Conservative flag, and away went the Liberty *and Property* Defence League, with marked emphasis on the word Property. I will say this — that Crofts struggled hard to keep Liberty to the fore. I also did my best in my editorial capacity; and, with the powerful aid of Lord Bramwell, the old ship was kept from canting over to any very noticeable extent. His resignation in 1887 — shortly followed by his death, the collapse of "Jus," the League's *bête noire*, in 1888, and now the untimely death of the helmsman, have resulted in the fulfilment of all the gloomy forebodings already chronicled. The League lurches well over to starboard, and — well, will it ever right itself? Or must we build a new one, which will welcome all lovers of liberty, — no matter to which party they belong, — and which will nail the flag of freedom for ever to its masthead?

That Singular Single Tax.

To the Editor of Liberty:

I send you some Single Tax *plumb-liners sadly out of plumb*, — all clipped from "Justice."

If dogs are a menace to the community, their destruction is in order. Taxing will make them less, both good and bad. Good things should not be taxed; bad things should be destroyed. This leaves no ground for the multiple taxer to stand on. To the front with the Single Tax.

How, if *good things* should not be taxed, and *bad things* should be destroyed, can the Single Tax come to the front?

The sole function of government is to protect the rights of the individual. What is necessary to accomplish this the government has a right to do, but nothing else.

The Single Tax is professedly based upon the right of the community to what it (the community) produces. But here is a clipping which says that what the landlord now gets belongs to the individual producing it.

Good government — high rents. Where it is worth living, you now pay the landlord for the very thing you are the maker of. Get it for yourself; make way for the Single Tax.

How they *do* get the individual and the community mixed!

Katherine J. Musson, a leading Single Taxer, wrote in "Justice" as follows:

If it is stealing when one man levies on the goods of another, is it not stealing when sixty-five million men, calling themselves a State, levy on a man's goods? It may be the professor's moral code to claim that "society holds a mortgage over all we do"; but, just the same, it is downright robbery, making the creation of the man greater than the man. How can an individual delegate a right to a State which he does not possess as an individual?

The writer of the following probably did not include the Single Tax in his list of "economic sophistries," but the exception does not appear.

Of all economic sophistries, the worst is that people must tax themselves in order to be prosperous. As well ask a man to take off his coat to get warm.

Did "Justice," in quoting the following lines, realize that, if a tax "lessens wages," a Single Tax could be no exception?

Our poets sweetly do my FIRST.
As ancient sages reckoned,
If you will give us but an inch,
We'll quickly take my SECOND.
My THIRD is what your wages lessens,
And hurts you every day.
My WHOLE will bring you many blessings:
Now, what's my name, I pray?

B. H.

(Answer: Sing-ell tax.)

Truly yours, WM. A. WHITTICK.

Egoism Either Way.

[John Badcock, Jr., in "Slaves to Duty."]

When the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes said: "Sanctification is the intense desire of the individual *not* to have his own way," he said something fit for the comic papers. If his "intense desire" is fulfilled, he *has* his own way.

A Thought for Mere Freethinkers.

[James Anthony Froude.]

As for the superstitions investing Christianity, they inevitably moulder, and hardly concern us so much as the growing superstitions which fancy themselves reasonable and progressive.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, STEPHEN T. BYINGTON, Bordentown, N. J.

Thanks to those who have offered to supply our friend with stamps and stationery, and to those who have sent sample stamps. If any one is not immediately called on, I hope he will not feel slighted.

To the man who does not join the A. L. W. C. because he thinks just one small member makes no difference.

DEAR SIR, — One man may be an insignificant item from some fair standpoints, but a great body of men, even small men, is a tremendous power. And I never heard of any way to get a large body but by putting together insignificant individuals, one at a time. The Corps will never have the power of a multitude till you and your friends come in as individuals. Snowflakes stop railroad trains when the snowflakes mean business and come right on.

But I am bound to tell you that the Corps is hitherto small enough to feel the help of every extra man that joins us. You will certainly, even if you are only a second-class man, make difference enough to be noticed by any one who could see all our work and its effects.

Target, section A. — Fergus Cameron, 750 Park Ave., N. Y. He has a letter in the Single-Tax Courier of February 16, saying that congress had no moral right to levy the Single Tax on the whole country, which "would be coercion," but only to assess a tax on the States in proportion to population, and let each State decide for itself how to raise its share. He says: "Let Single-Taxers expend their whole efforts for home rule, the true principle of democracy!" Show him that his principle of independence for localities makes no sense till extended to include independence for individuals.

Section B. — E. H. Snow, Topeka, Kan., editor of the Ottawa "Journal," says at the head of his editorial page: "Short contributions on State or national questions solicited." It is a Populist paper, especially interested in money, and strongly opposed to the "gold-bug" policy in all its parts. Show what is the true way out of money monopoly, or write on any other good Anarchistic point.

Section C. — H. B. Loud, Rockland, Mass., editor of the Rockland "Independent," target of Section A on January 26, says on February 8:

My Anarchist letters are coming in thick and fast, and will be published in due time, one each week. The manuscripts of these letters are models of neat penmanship, correct grammar, and elegant English. Manuscripts are not often like that, even when the thought is beautiful and strong.

And on February 15:

Now, my Anarchism means simply a belief that the individual has a right to do as he pleases, provided he does not interfere with the personal liberty of another.

Of course, in such a government, force could have no place. And so I am opposed to all present forms of government. But I don't believe in getting rid of these force-governments by their own weapon, force, as some Anarchists do. There are Anarchists of the dynamite kind, who, in this country, are few and far between.

But the country is full of Anarchists of a far more dangerous kind. These are represented in congress by the Republican humanitarians (?) who are trying to Christianize (?) those poor, innocent Hawaiians with United States warships and United States marines.

They are represented in the administration by a president who, however admirable he may appear in Hawaii, is trying to perpetuate a system of finance that has already brought this country near the verge of ruin.

Ah! but no one ever calls this Anarchy.

This is government — law and order — the highest type of civilization.

Well, then, if this be government, — *and it is*, — "let the devil wear black, for I'll have a suit of sables."

But it is Anarchy, — what you all understand by the word, — dynamite Anarchy of the most dangerous kind.

And that is why I am an Anarchist, — of a different type, however, — of the true type.

She elsewhere makes her position clearer as a non-resistant. Show what Anarchism is good for in the minds of those who do not believe in non-resistance; commend her sound statements; point out the practical advantages of Anarchism.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

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